

The Open Mike^{District 2}

A Newsletter From Councilman **Mike Knapp**

Volume 3, Number 5

September 2007

A Moment at the Mike

State of Shock

... and we're back!

As the summer heat starts to cool down, and—can it really be?—the leaves start to fade to brown, the County Council returns to its regular sessions. I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer, and that you were able to take advantage of all the summer opportunities that our county has to offer. It's a pleasure to be back to *The Open Mike*—and I've got something serious to talk with you about.

The State of Maryland is projected to run a deficit of \$1.5 billion. That's a sobering number, but we've grown so used to hearing about deficits that this number may have done no more than produce a disinterested yawn. But wait a minute—this isn't just a problem that's happening in Annapolis. This is a problem that directly affects you and me—because almost any solution to the deficit is going to affect *your* pocketbook and *your* way of life.

Let me explain.

After inadequately funding education for decades, the General Assembly six years ago recognized the need to increase the state's investment in education. To supplement local funding efforts, the General Assembly approved the Thornton Commission funding plan, a \$1.3 billion spending initiative. Thornton is a great program, but there was just one problem with this massive investment: the General Assembly didn't actually identify a way to fund the program. Worse, a tax reduction equal to roughly the same amount as the Thornton increase kicked in at about the same time.

Ouch.

Policies and spending practices like Thornton have resulted in an enormous structural deficit that threatens to undermine our economy in the coming years. I'm generally an optimist, but as a local policymaker, who keeps an eye on our county's budget and services, I have to confess I'm

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Councilmember Mike Knapp

State of Shock

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worried. There are several ways to get this budget deficit under control—and no matter which tactic the General Assembly chooses, you're going to feel the pinch.

I'm generally an optimist, but as a local policymaker, who keeps an eye on our county's budget and services, I have to confess I'm worried.

One way is for the state to reduce its investment in state government programs and projects. That might provide at least some budget relief, but it would also have an impact on services you've come to expect and rely on at the local level.

A more likely approach is for the state to reduce its financial obligations to the counties. That means scaling back the amount of money the state sends to Montgomery County—and every other county in the state. These are the funds the counties use primarily for education and law enforcement. And while these

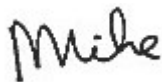
aren't enormous sums of money in Montgomery County—state funds make up about 20% of our total school budget, for example—we will have to find those missing hundreds of millions of dollars by reducing the amount we spend on other important local programs, like libraries and recreation centers. At that point, the only way to bring services back to current levels—and you can forget about any expansion in services—is to find a new source of revenue. And if you're unwilling to raise revenue—through taxes, fees, slots, or something else—well then, you've got to start cutting services . . . somewhere. That's the discussion we must have with our state legislators.

It comes down to this: If we want to continue with the same level of services in our county, there is no way that can occur unless there is some kind of revenue increase on the part of the state. If the state fails in its obligations to raise revenue, then the only way the state can achieve a balanced budget is on the backs of local jurisdictions. As a result, local governments will see a decrease in state resources, and will have to raise taxes or fees to make up the difference.

Our challenge as a local government is to work with the state and with other counties on coming up with a fair solution to the state's structural deficit dilemma. Montgomery County will always be the state's economic powerhouse, no matter what options are considered. Our county will always bear its fair share of the burden—we have a long-established track record in that regard; but we run the risk of continuing to pay more and more, and getting less and less in return.

I'm interested in knowing what you think. [Send me your comments](#) or give me a call at (240) 777-7955. It's my pleasure to serve.

Regards,



Mike Knapp
Councilmember, District 2

Knapp Sponsors Drought Relief for County Farmers

This summer has been a scorcher. The heat itself is enough to make us miserable, but when you couple it with a remarkable lack of rain, the result has been disastrous for area farmers, who depend on rain for their very livelihoods. That's enough to concern any resident of our county, but it hits us especially hard in the Upcounty region, where our proximity to the county's [Ag Reserve](#) gives us not only an affinity for the land, but a vested interest in farming.



The farmers across our County are outstanding stewards of the land, and great at what they do, but they cannot do the job without water. In conversations I have had with farmers across the region, they have expressed a concern that the current drought may cause them to lose 85 percent of their crop yield this year.

I want to help our farmers keep right on farming. That's why, on July 26, I introduced legislation to provide a special appropriation to provide a bit of relief for farmers who have been hit especially hard by the drought. My legislation -- which I introduced with the cosponsorship of Councilmembers Floreen and Leventhal, and with the support of County Executive Ike Leggett -- makes available \$1.5 million in emergency funding from the Department of Finance's Economic Development Fund. The County last provided emergency drought relief to farmers during the drought of 1999 -- and officials estimate that total farm losses in Montgomery County this summer could be as significant as the \$10.6 million in losses experienced in 1999.

According to the latest update of the [U.S. Drought Monitor Web site](#), which is compiled through information of several federal agencies including the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, most of the State of Maryland is currently suffering from some degree of drought conditions. A report from the Maryland State Department of Agriculture states that 25 to 60 percent of key crops across the state, including corn and soybeans, have already been lost.

The County has a long history of protecting the Agricultural Reserve and promoting our county's agricultural heritage—and that means ensuring that farming remains viable in the very land we have set aside for that purpose. While the recent rainstorms have helped some, unless conditions improve significantly, we run the risk of losing the vast majority of the crops this year and the farmers will lose income that they depend on. I truly hope conditions change so that no farmer has to make use of this program—but if they need assistance, we have an obligation to lend a hand.

But that's not all -- on the same day I introduced my legislation, Governor Martin O'Malley asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to formally declare all Maryland counties as suffering from "drought disaster," which makes our farmers eligible for low-interest federal loans. [Click here to read Governor O'Malley's statement.](#) I applaud the Governor for taking this step.

Councilmember Mike Knapp
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
(240) 777-7955

Public Meetings with Councilmember Knapp

Join Me for an Open Mike Night!



Why come to Rockville when you can stay in your community? Each autumn, I hold a number of open meetings in various communities, to give you a convenient opportunity to bring your concerns and comments to my attention, discuss the issues important to you, and meet with you in person.

The format is open and casual, and the agenda is . . . well, pretty much whatever you want to talk about. So come ready to talk; I'm coming prepared to listen. I'm hoping to add more meetings throughout the fall, so keep watching -- and I hope to see you there.

COMMUNITY	DATE	LOCATION
Germantown	Wednesday, September 19 7:00 p.m.	Germantown Library 19840 Century Blvd. Germantown, MD
Goshen	Saturday, September 29 10:00 a.m.	Church of Nazarene 8921 Warfield Road Gaithersburg, MD
Clarksburg	Monday, October 1 7:00 p.m.	Rocky Hill Middle School (cafeteria) 2240 Brick Haven Way Clarksburg, MD 20871
Montgomery Village	Wednesday, October 17 7:00 p.m.	<u>Gaithersburg Library</u> 18330 Montgomery Village Avenue Gaithersburg, MD

Money Ranks Olney 17th of "Best Places to Live"

Money magazine recently issued its [Top 100 "Best Places to Live" in the United States](#), taking into consideration a wide number of factors, such as economic opportunity, good schools, safe streets, things to do and a sense of community. Middleton, Wisconsin, may have placed first on the list, but Maryland scored an impressive *five* communities in the top 100, including a **17th place finish by the Upcounty community of Olney**.

You can see how Olney stacks up by visiting:

<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2007/snapshots/PL2458900.html>

Other Maryland communities making the list are Elkridge (42), Catonsville (49), Eldersburg (56) and Crofton (72).

Congratulations to Olney and the four Maryland communities on *Money's* list. It comes as no surprise to any of us that our communities are a terrific place to live and work.

Wynn Secures Funding for Germantown Biotech Project

I'm pleased to pass along this bit of good news from the office of [Congressman Al Wynn](#):

As part of the FY08 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill passed by the House of Representatives, Congressman Albert R. Wynn (D-MD) successfully secured \$1.5 million in funding for the Germantown Biotechnology Project, a collaborative effort of Montgomery College, Montgomery County, the University of Maryland, the Montgomery College Foundation, and the State of Maryland.

The Biotechnology Project aims to enhance Maryland's leading role in biosciences and biotechnology, and provides opportunities for underserved and minority populations to pursue careers in the biosciences. Federal funding secured by Congressman Wynn will go to facilities planning and design, as well as site infrastructure upgrades. Funding in the bill was provided at Congressman Wynn's request.

"The Germantown Biotechnology Project is positioned to play a major role in Maryland's leadership in biotechnology and the Life Sciences," said Wynn. "The project will not only be helpful to developing the science and technology to cure disease and improve human health, but it will also improve Maryland's growing biotech economy, and provide high-paying, high-tech jobs for Marylanders. I am proud to have secured Federal funding to extend the educational and economic opportunities for Maryland students, researchers, and businessmen that will result from this Project," concluded Wynn.

This is good news, and I applaud Congressman Wynn's leadership and advocacy for this important project.

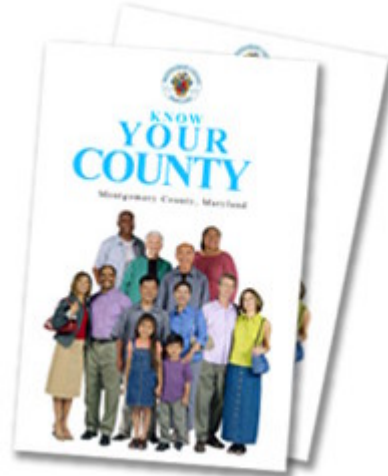
Know Your County Guides Are Now Available

Montgomery County's Office of Community Partnerships, in collaboration with Discovery Communications, Inc., Host Hotels and Resorts, and The League of Women Voters, has published a guide to Montgomery County's government called *Know Your County*.

Included in the 72-page guide are clear and concise descriptions of Montgomery County government offices and departments, as well as contact information. Also included is an alphabetical listing of services; County department hotlines and election, schools and courts information.

Know Your County is available online at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/> and will be updated periodically. Links to English, Spanish and Chinese language versions of the guide are provided. A limited supply of printed copies in English may be picked up from the Office of Community Partnerships.

For more information about the guide, or to find out where copies can be picked up, call 240-777-2500.



Metro Funding Bills Advance in U.S. Congress

As longtime readers of *The Open Mike* know, I consider our region's growing transportation needs to be one of the most significant and important challenges facing our county. As Vice Chair of the [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#) (COG), and a member of the [Transportation Planning Board](#) (TPB), the federally-mandated body responsible for transportation planning in the Greater Washington region, one of the major challenges I've been working to address is ensuring a vibrant [Metro](#) system.

Metro remains one of the most important parts of our region's transportation infrastructure. It's important, therefore, that we ensure it continues to meet our needs well into the future. I think we can move closer to making that vision a reality if we can prove we can take good care of the system we already have, then work to expand it. To that end, as a member of COG, the TPB -- but mostly as a Councilmember and Upcounty resident -- I'm pleased to report that some help is on the way.



Earlier this year, Maryland Senators [Ben Cardin](#) and [Barbara Mikulski](#) -- with the sponsorship of Virginia Senators [John Warner](#) and [James Webb](#) -- introduced [S. 1446](#), the National Capital Transportation Amendments Act of 2007. Similar legislation, [H.R. 401](#), has been introduced in the House of Representatives by the Maryland and Virginia delegations. Each of these bills asks the federal government to commit \$1.5 billion for Metro capital improvements over the next ten years, provided that the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia also provide financial support. With such increased funding, there would also be an improved oversight mechanism to ensure these funds are used effectively to improve all aspects of our transit system.

On August 1, S. 1446 was favorably reported out of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, and has been referred to the full Senate for further consideration. H.R. 401 was passed out of the House committee on Oversight and Government Reform in May, and has been awaiting full consideration by the House of Representatives. House Report 110-141 was filed at the time H.R. 401 was reported out of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

I applaud the leadership of our Congressional and Senate delegations on getting the bills this far. Similar legislation was introduced by the Maryland and Virginia delegations last year, but didn't pass, though it certainly wasn't from lack of trying on the part of our delegations. Let's hope Congress is more favorably disposed this year.

But we've got work to do at the State level, too. The federal funding bills require each local jurisdiction to provide a dedicated funding source -- and last year, only Washington, D.C., formally approved legislation to provide Metro with a dedicated funding stream. A number of Maryland State Delegates and Senators -- such as Senators Kramer and Hogan, and Delegates Hixson, Montgomery, and Barkley -- worked hard, though unsuccessfully, last year to pass legislation to fund Metro and other forms of mass transit. I'm hopeful similar efforts will be better received during the next legislative session. To that end, I encourage you to [contact the Governor](#) or your State legislators to let them know your views on dedicated funding for Metro.

And while you're at it, drop Senators Cardin and Mikulski a line and let them know that you appreciate their work and sponsorship.

Help Wanted!**Judges Needed for 2008 Primary Election**

Maryland plays an early -- and key -- role in the Presidential primaries, with our February 12, 2008 primary election being among one of the first in the nation. Voting is a responsibility Maryland's citizens take seriously -- and your government relies on your help to ensure things run smoothly. We can't hold an election in any community without the invaluable assistance of primary election judges. These are the individuals who check-in voters, provide instructions and answer questions, and generally monitor the activities in the polling place.



You don't have to be an attorney to be an election judge; all that's required is a sense of community and a commitment of your time. You must also be a registered voter of the State of Maryland, read and speak English, have at least a modicum of people skills, an ability to lift 25 lbs, and be computer proficient. Spanish-speaking judges are always needed, though an ability to speak another language is not required. However, mandatory training is required to serve as an election judge.

For more information, visit <http://www.777vote.org/>, then follow the link to read about election judges. Here's a complete listing of the positions that are needed, courtesy of the Board of Elections:

Check-In Judges:

Election morning, assist with setting up assigned polling place and check-in table. Works in tandem with another Check-in Judge, greets and processes to confirm their eligibility to vote at the polling place. Locate each voter's name in the precinct register, provide Voter Authority Card (VAC), establish identity of the voter as prescribed in Maryland statute, verify voter's address, and have the voter make any appropriate changes. Collect and record data about number of voters processed and provide such data to the Chief Judge. After the polls close, conduct audit or reconciliation of number of voters. Assist other judges as necessary to provide technical assistance to close polls and transmit election results when directed. If necessary, set up voting machines before the polls open and take them down after the polls close. Attend mandatory technical and procedural training classes (approximately 3-4 hours) and team meetings as directed by Election Supervisor at voting center in precincts.

Voting Unit Judge:

Election morning, assist with setting up assigned polling place. Works collaboratively with another Voting Unit Judge to encode voter access card for each voter to permit voter to access and vote the appropriate ballot. Assist voters as necessary with the voting process. Collect and record data about number of voters processed and provide such data to the Chief Judge. After the polls close, conduct audit or reconciliation of number of voters. Provide technical assistance to other judges as necessary to close polls and transmit election results when directed. If necessary, set up voting machines before the polls open and take them down after the polls close. Assist other judges as required. Attend mandatory technical and procedural training classes (approximately 3-4 hours) and team meetings as directed by Election Supervisor at voting center in precincts.

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Chairman's Corner

Ed Committee Discusses Budget Priorities, Financial Management



After a brief hiatus for the summer, the County Council's Education Committee will again be meeting regularly throughout the autumn. We'll be beginning our work on the FY09 budget, as we discuss budget priorities for higher education, including Montgomery College, and funding for MCPS. We'll also receive updates on adult literacy and on career and technical education.

We'll also be discussing OLO Report 2008-1, the Base Budget Review of School Plant Operations, with an eye toward the coming budget season. I've also asked for an update on the implementation of the school finance management system, in an effort to continue further clarity and transparency in the MCPS budget.

Education Committee Schedule

The information is subject to change, so please check the Council's website as dates near for updated information. Unless otherwise indicated, all committee meetings will convene in the 7th Floor hearing room of the Council Office Building.

DATE	TIME	MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION
September 24	9:30 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FY09 Annual Budget Priorities - College - FY09 Annual Budget Priorities - MCPS - OLO Report 2008-1, Base Budget Review of School Plant Operations
October 1	2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolution to approve categorial transfer of \$910,171 for MCPS FY07 Provision for Future Supported Projects - Update on MCPS Financial Management System Implementation - Briefing on MCPS Quarterly Financial Status Report - Resolutions to amend the MCPS FY2007-2012 CIP and transfer \$9,175,000 project balance from Unliquidated Surplus
October 8	9:30 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly Briefing on Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy - Briefing on Career and Technology Education
October 22	9:30 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Use of Public Facilities - Use of school space for youth outreach

Step Up To *The Open Mike* -- Subscribe!

The Open Mike is an electronic newsletter published monthly by Councilmember Michael J. Knapp (District 2). If you would like to be added to the electronic distribution, visit:

<https://ext01.montgomerycountymd.gov/entp/s1p/esubpublic/newssubscriber.do>

Be sure to indicate you'd like to subscribe to information on **District 2**.

Ride On Adds New Bus Service to Germantown Transit Center



On September 2, [Montgomery County's Ride On](#) added more service to Routes 21, 22 and 61 to make traveling by bus easier and more convenient.

For [Route 21](#), which travels between Silver Spring and the Briggs Chaney Park and Ride lot, schedules were adjusted for both the morning and afternoon service so they more accurately reflect the actual time it takes the bus to travel in traffic.

[Route 22](#) provides more service to the Food and Drug Administration headquarters in White Oak, with more frequent buses during rush hours. Buses now leave the Silver Spring Metro station every 15 minutes in the morning and arrive at the Metro every 15 minutes in the afternoon. Route 22 runs between Silver Spring and Hillandale.

[Route 61](#), from the Shady Grove Metro station towards the Germantown Transit Center, provides two additional trips serving Mercy Clinic and the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration. Regular passengers should note that the bus schedule on this route has changed.

Check the new Ride On bus schedules on the County's website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rideon or call the Transit Information Center at 240-777-RIDE (7433).

Judges

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Assistant Chief Judge:

Election morning, assist with setting up assigned polling place. Works collaboratively with another Assistant Chief Judge to serve as Provisional Ballot Election Judge; provide provisional voter with provisional application and ballot, maintain security; assist Chief Election Judge and fill-in for other election judges' duties as necessary. On election night, with counterpart, return all Critical Supplies to the Board of Elections return site. Provide technical assistance to other judges as necessary; assist with set-up of voting machines before polls open. Attend mandatory technical and procedural training classes (approximately 5 hours) and team meetings as directed by Election Supervisor at voting center in precincts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Democrats	(240) 777-8570	democrats@montgomerycountymd.gov
Republicans	(240) 777-8575	republicans@montgomerycountymd.gov

Or complete the online form, available here:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/elections/questionnaire.pdf>

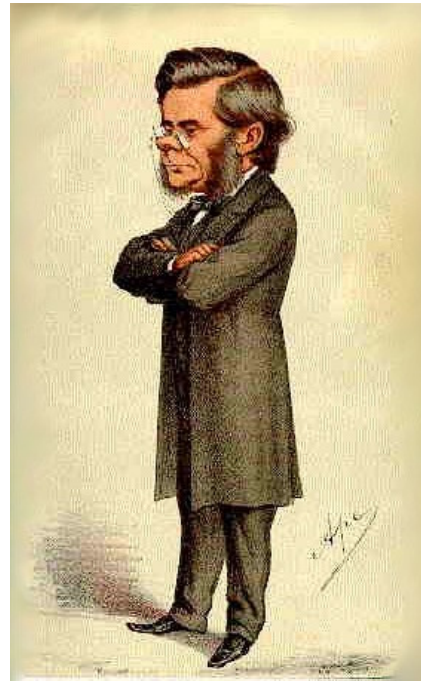
The Upcounty Road Scholar

MD124 Slated for Widening; No All-Way Stop at Germantown Library

Got a road that needs repairing? A traffic light that's out? Is there a street or intersection that you think needs a stop sign or crosswalk? One of my responsibilities is to make sure someone knows about it -- and to do what I can to get you information on your question or request as quickly as possible.

I stay in regular contact with the [Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation](#) (DPWT) and the [Maryland State Highways Administration](#) (MSHA), and provide each agency with a list of projects that need addressing in the Upcounty. Both agencies receive countless requests each week, and getting a response back can take some time. So bear with me -- if you don't see a particular project listed here, that doesn't mean it has been forgotten or neglected, but rather that I haven't received an updated report on its progress this month.

With this in mind, the Road Scholar section of The Open Mike provides an opportunity to give you the latest information received from DPWT, MSHA, and others on the progress of requests that have been submitted on your behalf. It's also an opportunity for you to [let me know](#) of other projects that may need to be undertaken in your community.



Got question or suggestion about road repairs in your area? [E-mail the Road Scholar](#) and let us know.

Department of Public Works and Transportation

All-way Stop at Celebration Way and Town Center Drive: Back in July, I contacted DPWT to request an all-way stop sign at Celebration Way and Town Center Drive in Germantown, which is the major intersection in front of the new Germantown Library. Residents, walkers, and readers who use the Library have pointed out that traffic at this intersection can be particularly crazy -- a number of near-misses have already been reported -- so I asked DPWT to look into a four-way stop at this intersection (as opposed to the two-way stop presently located there).

DPWT initiated a study to determine whether an all-way stop is warranted, or whether additional improvements may be necessary at the intersection. I recently received the results of the study from Marcy Katzman, of the DPWT Traffic Engineering and Studies Team. While DPWT has concluded that intersection does not merit an all-way stop (wait! don't start throwing things yet), it did recommend a number of other improvements at the intersection to increase safety.

Here is DPWT's letter to me, in its entirety:

"Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) conducted a traffic study and the results of our investigation reveal that the intersection of Celebration Way and Town Commons Drive does not meet the warrants for an all-way stop control because the side

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The Road Scholar

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street volumes are too low to justify the installation. DPWT adheres to the warrants that are established in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, a nationally accepted document used to guide the placement of traffic controls in the public right-of-way, to determine the appropriateness of all-way stop controls. We have a County-wide policy to preserve the livability of residential areas by providing safe traffic control. The use of unwarranted multi-way stop signs creates additional noise and air pollution. One common misconception about stop signs is that they are used for speed control or to arbitrarily interrupt through traffic. Please understand that their purpose is to assign the right-of-way to one flow of traffic over another. When a multi-way stop sign is used at an intersection that does not require assignment of right-of-way, violation rates tend to be extremely high, thus reducing safety instead of improving it.

"During our investigation we observed pedestrian activity at the intersection of Celebration Way and Town Commons Drive. However, there are no marked crosswalks at the intersection for pedestrians to cross the streets safely. Therefore, we recommend installing marked crosswalks on both sides of Celebration Way and on the southern leg of Town Commons Drive approaching Celebration Way. We also recommend installing all the necessary pedestrian crossing signs to warn motorists to watch for pedestrians while navigating the intersection.

"In addition, based on our field review we recommend the following:

- Trimming the tree located at the northeastern corner of the intersection so that the stop sign for westbound Celebration Way will be visible to motorists.
- Removing the existing 24" stop signs on both approaches of Celebration Way and replacing them with new 30" stop signs.
- Installing "Cross Traffic Does Not Stop" signs under the existing stop signs on both approaches of Celebration Way."

While I know that's disappointing to area residents, there is some good news . . .

Traffic Signal at Celebration Blvd. and Crystal Rock Drive: I'm pleased to report that construction is underway on an all-way signal at the next major intersection down from the library, at Celebration Blvd. and Crystal Rock Drive.

Maryland State Highway Administration

Widening of MD 124 between Brink and Airpark (Olney/Laytonsville): MSHA plans to upgrade MD 124 to four-lane cross section roadway between Warfield Road and Airpark Road. MSHA has put the work out for bid, and will begin construction this fall.

Sidewalk on Clopper Road (MD 117) between Kingsview and Steeple Roads (Germantown): MSHA staff informs me they have evaluated the feasibility of constructing new sidewalk along MD 117 in this area, under the parameters of MSHA's Sidewalk Retrofit Program. MSHA has determined that the construction of sidewalk between Hopkins Road and Steeple Road is feasible under its program, and will submit this area as a candidate for future funding from the state legislature. Due to funding constraints, only a select number of projects on the list are approved for funding each year.

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No Protected Left Turn on MD 108 at Sherwood High School (Olney/Laytonsville):

Following several concerned e-mails about excessive speeds and long lines of cars preparing to turn into Sherwood High School in the mornings, I asked MSHA to look into the feasibility of a left-turn signal on the westbound MD 108 at Sherwood High School. MSHA conducted such a study, and here's what District Engineer Darrell Mobley had to tell me:



"Factors such as the number of lanes, speeds, crash occurrence and volumes (left turns as well as opposing traffic) were considered as part of this analysis. We found that the combination of left turns and opposing traffic are well below the minimum recommended threshold for a protected left turn phase. During observations we noted that sufficient gaps were available for left-turning vehicles from westbound MD 108 to complete their maneuver. Additionally, we observed that more than 90 percent of the peak hour left-turning volume was able to complete the maneuver on the green.... In addition, our review of the crash history at this intersection for the past three years did not reveal a crash problem correctable by a left turn phase. Therefore, we are not recommending installation of a left turn phase along westbound MD 108 at this intersection at this time."

However, to enhance safety at this location, Mr. Mobley continues:

"...we have requested that our maintenance staff upgrade the existing school signs to the new fluorescent yellow green signs, which are brighter in color and command more attention. We have requested that additional signs with 'fines double' plaques underneath be installed to encourage driver compliance with the speed limit. The faded pedestrian crossing pavement marking legends along MD 108 will also be re-painted. These upgrades will re-define the school zone and enhance safety in front of Sherwood High School. This work should be completed by the end of the summer."

Traffic Signal at Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Dennis Avenue: A number of frustrated drivers asked if there was any way of regulating traffic in all directions at this intersection, preferably through modifying the current colored arrows to a flashing red light. I asked MSHA about this, pointing out that visibility at the intersection also remained a major problem. Here's what MSHA reported back to me:

"As you mentioned, there is considerable concern for visibility, especially on the Dennis Avenue approaches to MD 97. For this reason, we have provided a side street phase operation to safely provide access to MD 97 from both Dennis Avenue approaches. Along MD 97 we have provided exclusive phasing for left-turning vehicles, which is activated when vehicles are detected in the left turn lanes. Installing a proposed flashing red light would not be acceptable on MD 97 nor the Dennis Avenue approach due to safety concerns. Based on our review, we are not recommending any modifications at this time."

Mitchell Named As New Clarksburg Ombudsman

Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett has named Kathleen Mitchell as the County's new Clarksburg Ombudsman, a position designed to break through the bureaucracy and provide the residents of Clarksburg the community they were promised. Mitchell replaces former ombudsman Jennifer Russel, who resigned the position in early April to take a position as director of planning with Rodgers Consulting in Germantown.

Mitchell comes to this position with more than 20 years of experience in fields directly related to planning, zoning, community and economic development. From 1986 to 1994, she worked for Montgomery County government – first as a Planning Coordinator in the Department of Economic Development, then as Manager of the Silver Spring Redevelopment Program. Following that, she served as Director of Revitalization in Fairfax County, and Director of the Department of Community Planning and Development Services for the City of Rockville. Most recently, Mitchell worked as Senior Development Review Specialist for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and, for the past year, as Manager of Joint Development for the Washington-Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. She received a B.A. in Politics from Catholic University and a Masters in Public Administration/Urban Studies from Bowling Green State University.

In her new position, Mitchell will serve as the County Executive's representative in Clarksburg, working as a liaison between the community, businesses and high-level County government officials. Her duties will include promoting and facilitating the delivery of County services to the residents of Clarksburg and providing recommendations for solving problems. Mitchell will assume her new duties on September 17.

I'm pleased to welcome Kathleen to this position -- and my thanks to Jennifer Russel for her hard work on behalf of the Clarksburg community.

Contact Me!

I always welcome your views and comments, whether in person, electronically, or by phone. Here's all the information you need to reach me:



Councilmember Mike Knapp

100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

[\[Click here for a map.\]](#)

(240) 777-7955

Councilmember.Knapp@montgomerycountymd.gov

County Council Public Hearings Calendar

Council Considers Food Labeling, Drought Assistance, Budget

Don't be shy! The County Council regularly holds public hearings at which we actively seek your input, thoughts, comments, and suggestions. The policies, amendments, and legislation under consideration aren't just pieces of paper; they have a very real impact on you and the lives of your fellow citizens. For this reason, residents are always encouraged to attend the public hearings and give us your views.

Hearings are held in the Council's main meeting room on the 7th Floor of the County Office Building at 100 Maryland Avenue in Rockville. ([Click here for a map.](#)) If you wish to testify on any of the items listed below, please call (240) 777-7931.

One more thing -- the hearing schedule can change rapidly, so always check the [County Council's home page](#) to get the most up-to-date information.

DATE	TIME	MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION
September 18	1:30 p.m.	Resolution regarding Spending Affordability Guidelines for FY 09 Capital Budget and FY09-14 CIP
	1:30 p.m.	Expedited Bill 20-07 : Bond Authorization
	7:30 p.m.	Bill 19-07: Eating and Drinking Establishments - Nutrition Labeling - Resolution to adopt Board of Health Regulation requiring certain eating and drinking establishments to post certain nutrition information on menu boards and menus.
September 20	7:30 p.m.	Resolution to affirm rejection of incorporation of Rollingwood Village of Chevy Chase
September 25	1:30 p.m.	Supplemental appropriation to the County Government's FY08 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services: \$1,992,430 for a maintenance, staging and storage facility for MCFRS apparatus.
	1:30 p.m.	Supplemental appropriation to the County Government's FY08 Operating Budget, Arts and Humanities Council Non-Departmental Account: \$90,000 for Sandy Spring Odd Fellows Hall